

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 03023 051419Z
ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3023

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, UR
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

1. ON VERY SHORT NOTICE, I WAS INVITED TODAY TO MAKE MY CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO.
2. IN HALF-HOUR CONVERSATION WHICH WAS MOSTLY PROTOCOLARY IN NATURE, MINISTER SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING YOU AND HOPED THAT DURING YOUR MARCH VISIT GOOD PROGRESS TOWARD SOLUTIONS OF CRITICAL PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY SALT AND MIDDLE EAST, COULD BE MADE. RE FORMER, SOVIET GOVT FELT STRONGLY WE SHOULD PROCEED ON BASIS OF VLADIVOSTOK UNDERSTANDING AND ANY DEVIATIONS THEREFROM WOULD DELAY PROGRESS. RE MIDDLE EAST, GROMYKO RECOGNIZED THAT IN MARCH MEETING LITTLE MORE THAN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS COULD BE EXPECTED BUT FOLLOW-ON DISCUSSIONS, IN "DIFFERENT VENUE", SHOULD BE ENVISAGED. IN ANY CASE, TALKS HE FELT SHOULD BE UNSTRUCTURED--I.E. NO FORMAL AGENDA--AND EACH SIDE SHOULD FEEL FREE TO RAISE SUBJECTS OF ITS CHOICE.
3. GROMYKO CONFESSED TO SOME CONFUSION AS TO MY STATUS. ACCORDING TO TASS REPORT, "SOME AMBASSADORS WERE CONFIRMED, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 03023 051419Z

OTHERS WERE NOT CONFIRMED", AND IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING I WAS IN LATTER CATEGORY. I EXPLAINED WHAT UNDERLAY WITHDRAWAL OF MY NAME FROM SENATE AS BEST I COULD, BUT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT SINCE I MYSELF AM LARGELY IN THE DARK AS TO MY STATUS, MY ELOQUENCE AND CERTAINLY MY PERSUASIVENESS WERE SOMEWHAT CIRCUMSCRIBED. GROMYKO SAID IN ANY CASE I AM NOW THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR AND HE WOULD

DEAL WITH ME AS SUCH.

4. COMMENT: THIS, I BELIEVE, WAS GROMYKO'S FIRST DAY AT HIS DESK AFTER AT LEAST 6 WEEKS' ABSENCE WHICH HE SAID WAS SPENT AT NEAR-BY SANITARIUM, BOROVIKHA. EVEN ACCOUNTING GENEROUSLY FOR THE NORMAL TOLL OF ADVANCING YEARS, I FELT HE HAD DETERIORATED CONSIDERABLY SINCE I LAST SAW HIM. HE HAS LOST MUCH OF HIS OLD VIGOR, HIS MEMORY HAD DIMMED, AND HIS WIT IS NOT AS SHARP AS IT WAS IN YEARS PAST. HE MAY BOUNCE BACK, BUT I SUSPECT OTHERS WILL CARRY MUCH OF HIS LOAD FROM NOW ON.

TOON

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